1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them while she does her other work, but when they are old enough, they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when house repairs are needed or there are implements to be mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

The times for meals have not varied since the days when Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[9] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is interrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a vodun dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part*.

1: Her[illegible]ts E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here."

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Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced.

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Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow.

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The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539] *"Rat, rat, rat,*
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent
ba 'ou,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."

"Rat, rat, rat,
I give you a nice little
tooth,
Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 593 602 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
603 593 604 his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exercised before grandparents than other relations, for while there

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, tzau tzau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotal!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, tzau tzau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotal
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-RR]

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77. *Playing Tchatcha.*

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78. *Playing Bèlmont Yaya.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Like their ancestors in preslavery days, the Haitians had a clear-cut and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's fortitude and energy:

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> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.[1]

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children, carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them, and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings of her own.

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Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can

[1] [Johnston, The Negro in the New World. Cf p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P. 18. Cf 1352, Category 116. -- Against]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant.

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers.

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances.

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine.

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions.

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves.